

## CONIFEROUS WETLAND FOREST BIRD INVENTORY

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Wisconsin has far more coniferous wetland forest acreage than upland boreal forest, making this habitat type very important to boreal species whose ranges extend into Wisconsin. Coniferous wetlands (specifically, tamarack and northern white-cedar swamps and black spruce bogs) are used by neotropical migrant birds, like warblers and flycatchers, as well as resident species typical of the more extensive boreal habitats of Minnesota and Canada. Coniferous wetlands also contain some of the State's more rare and habitat-specific plant species.



We conducted bird and plant surveys at 111 coniferous-wetland sites in the Northern Highland Section of Wisconsin (Fig. 1) during the 2002-03 field seasons. We encountered 62 bird species, including 10 "Species of Special Concern," with Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, and Cape May Warbler among the later group. We are presently analyzing the data to gain an understanding of bird distributions and habitat associations. The resulting models will help resource managers to predict bird distribution and abundance in each of the 12,760 coniferous wetland forest stands in the Northern Highlands region.

Coniferous wetland forests are poorly understood by current management standards. These forests are slow to regenerate, have long rotation lengths, and generally do not respond well to management prescriptions. A comprehensive inventory of coniferous wetland forests and related biota will provide better management information, thus reducing our chances of endangering wildlife resources through negligence.

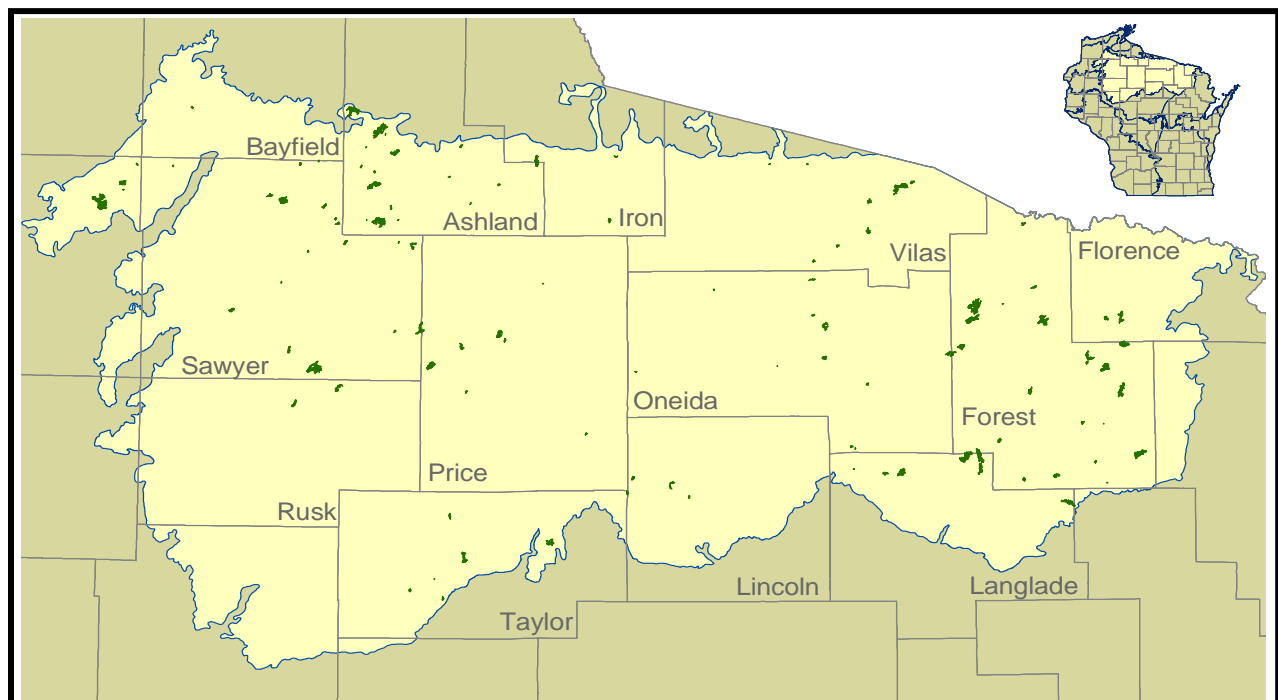


Figure 1. Distribution of 111 study sites surveyed for birds, plants, and natural communities during 2002 and 2003 in the Northern Highlands Section of Wisconsin.